



Esprit de Corps

A Bulletin of the Washington Service Corps



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Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service - January 17, 2011

Legislation was signed in 1983 creating a federal holiday marking the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The federal holiday was first observed in 1986, making 2011 the 25th anniversary of the King federal holiday.

In 1994, Congress designated the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday as a national day of service and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service with leading this effort. Taking place each year on the third Monday in January, the MLK Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service – a "day on, not a day off." The MLK Day of Service is a part of United We Serve, the President's national call to service initiative. It calls for Americans from all

walks of life to work together to provide

solutions to our most pressing national problems. The MLK Day of Service empowers individuals, strengthens communities, bridges barriers, and creates solutions to social problems.

Why Serve on MLK Day of Service?

Dr. King believed in a nation of freedom and justice for all, and encouraged all citizens to live up to the purpose and potential of America by applying the principles of nonviolence to make this country a better place to live.

The 25th anniversary of the King Federal Holiday is the perfect time for Americans to answer Dr. King's challenge to do something for others. Just as Dr. King set big goals and focused relentlessly on results, we need sustained citizen action to address today's social challenges.

The MLK Day of Service is a way to transform Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and teachings into community action that helps solve social problems. That service may meet a tangible need, or it may meet a need of the spirit. On this day, Americans of every age and background celebrate Dr. King through service projects that strengthen communities, empower individuals, bridge barriers, and create solutions.

Find a project in your area, or post information about your project at:
www.mlkday.gov



Members give feedback on SERVES

We asked for feedback – and we got it! Thank you to the 418 individuals who completed the survey on the November 8-11, 2010, SERVES Institute. Based on those responses:

- 59% of members overall found the institute valuable or very valuable
- 49% of members felt the training was either effective or very effective in providing skills for service
- 71% of members felt they had increased their overall career development skills and abilities
- 62% of members felt they increased their skills in or knowledge of networking
- 58% of members felt they increased their skills in or knowledge about educational opportunities

While these statistics are encouraging, isn't it always the negative moments that stick in your mind? One area clearly not a shining moment – comments made by the Yakima Police Officer addressing the membership at the opening ceremony. While the WSC had the best of intentions and had hoped to have a short speech about general common sense personal safety for anyone coming into an unfamiliar community, the remarks made by the police officer were clearly offensive and unnecessary. Despite three WSC staff taking the time to brief the officer on the need and expectations, the officer clearly had his own story to tell about Yakima.

On the positive side of the opening ceremony however, was Mayor Micah Cawley. Members were impressed that the mayor was 26 years old – the median age of the members in the room. More than one member commented “I found it very encouraging that the Mayor of Yakima is just 26 and succeeding in his career. I wish he could have stayed to eat with us so that we could have met him and heard more of his story”.

Members enjoyed being able to participate in the service projects the second day of the conference. One member noted, “The Catholic Community Services Yard Work Project was a great opportunity to

turn some of the great theory that had been taught at SERVES and throughout the AmeriCorps year into application. I found the work to be rewarding and fruitful. Plus, it gave me the opportunity to better get to know my fellow AmeriCorps members throughout the state. This was one of the highlights of my SERVES experience.”



Veteran's Memorial Service Project

One area of interest included an overwhelming number of comments on the survey that dealt with the depth of the training. Many members felt that the training offered was too introductory in nature. Members wanted more in-depth training or training at a higher level. Many workshops received comments that they were too short and there wasn't enough time to get into the subject matter; while others were deemed too long.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, WSC has been looking at redesigning the format and content of the SERVES Institute for the 2011-2012 program year. We have gathered feedback from project supervisors and members and hope to have a focus group work with us to improve our delivery of training to our members. An on-line learning tool is in development to address some of the core training requirements. Members would be able to access the learning tool whenever it's convenient for them, whether at their work site or at home. More details to follow in the coming months!



Yakima Mayor Micah Cawley addresses the members.



Members prepare to march in the Veteran's Day Parade

Lincoln Health Center meeting needs in Walla Walla

When Sara Wade was searching for AmeriCorps positions, she had no idea that she would find one that seemed tailor-made specifically for her. Sara was finishing up her four years at Whitman College in Walla Walla and had decided she wanted to take some time to give back to the community that had become her home. Sara was looking for positions in health-related fields, but hadn't found anything that really sparked her interest. A friend called and told her about the position with Blue Mt. Action Council, a project site of the Washington Service Corps.

The position was located at the Lincoln Health Center, a school-based health center located next to an alternative high school. Lincoln Health Center is the only school-based health center in eastern Washington and has been in operation for two years. A lot of the professional staff volunteers their time and the clinic provides a full spectrum of medical services.

Sara splits her time between the health center and the alternative school. Her time in the school is spent developing relationships with the students and working with the intervention specialist to make sure the students have what they need to be successful and graduate. Sara refers them to community resources, assists with arranging transportation, obtaining bus passes, and trying to reduce truancy.

One example of the service provided is the story of a 15-year old homeless student who had been very ill with an upper respiratory infection, but

neither she nor her mother could afford the medicine that she needed. She also lacked the warm clothing necessary for the colder fall/winter weather.

With the help of the prescribing physician at the Lincoln Health Center, the necessary medicines were made available to allow the girl to get well. Prescriptions for the otherwise expensive over-the-counter drugs allowed the girl to acquire them from a pharmacy. Money from the school principle allowed a shopping trip for new winter clothes.

"So often I feel powerless when hearing about the many hardships of the students at Lincoln alternative high school," says Sara. "But it was very rewarding to be involved in a situation where I had the power and resources to help a student in need – and her little smile of appreciation made my work feel very valuable."

When asked if there was a downside to the service she provides, Sara responds, "Sometimes it's hard to stay objective. You get involved with the students; hearing their stories and what they have gone through and yet marvel at their resiliency to keep going and persevere." Her

service so far has been everything she'd hoped it to be and she looks forward to the coming months and the experience she will gain from this year of service.



Lincoln Health Center in Walla Walla



Sara on a service project with her team, sorting canned goods at a food bank

Creating Effective Member-Supervisor Relationships

Effective member-supervisor relationships can change lives and impact communities. When a member and supervisor click, both parties feel engaged and excited about their service. The community benefits and goals are met.

But not all member-supervisor pairings are a good match. Even veteran supervisors have members they struggle to communicate with or disagree over values.

As with any relationship, supervisors and members can clash over any number of things. Some common sticking points include:

- Different work ethics
- Difference in personalities, work habits, communication styles
- Not keeping each other informed about emerging issues
- Power struggles over responsibilities and credit for work done
- Failure to follow through on commitments

Reminder:
Member
Performance
Evaluations
Due
January 31, 2011

Ways to address these issues:

- Negotiate a solid set of working agreements
- Clarify expectations from the beginning
- Address the behavior, not the person
- Give specific, timely feedback
- Try to understand the situation from multiple perspectives
- Commit to working together for a win-win
- Consult a neutral third party

An effective member-supervisor relationship creates layers of benefits. It impacts:

- The work the member does during service
- The life of the member
- The spirit and work of the supervisor
- The engagement and involvement of the community



Benefits for the member:

- Greater service satisfaction and personal goals met
- Better advocacy of the issues
- Greater mobilization of community assets and resources
- More effective problem solving, corrective action and conflict resolution
- Stronger connection and commitment to the host, sponsor and community
- Increased productivity as a result of the partnership with the supervisor
- More accurate pulse of how the service term is proceeding

Benefits for the Supervisor:

- Greater job satisfaction
- Deeper commitment and advocacy of the issues
- More effective problem solving and conflict resolution
- Stronger connection to the host, sponsor and community
- Increased chances of rejuvenation to carry on the work
- Transfer greater cultural competency to the member

INNOVATION
SUCCESS
EVALUATION
DEVELOPMENT
GROWTH
SOLUTION
PROGRESS
MARKETING



Material taken from The Resource Center; Tools and Tips for Volunteer and Service Projects

REACH reaches out to Pierce County Youth

Partnering with 32 social service organizations, REACH is a one-stop shop for education and employment needs for low-income, at-risk youth, ages 16-24, in Pierce County. Washington Service Corps (WSC) individual placement member Becky Plant serves in the resource room at REACH. Here teens can search for job leads, get help on writing resumes, completing applications and hear about the educational opportunities available to them.

Becky spends the first part of her day searching for job openings that would suit her clients. Food service; retail; seasonal work; warehouse work; customer service, cashier positions; these represent industries that are willing to hire teens. Many of the youth have barriers to employment, such as high

working in the fashion industry. Becky helped her create a work portfolio consisting of a resume, cover letter and list of references. Together, they applied to retail positions and conducted mock interviews to prepare. The client interviewed for a position at a store where she wanted to work and when she got the job, told Becky that she didn't think she could have done it without Becky's help.

"That's the best part of my service. Getting to know the youth; hearing what their future dreams and goals are and then working with them individually to achieve their goals."

A second WSC member, Dani Neitzelt, serving with Employment Security's WorkSource office also is a point of contact for young people coming in to look for help with career development and educational opportunities.

Dani also attends youth gatherings and community forums to share information about the opportunities provided by AmeriCorps and WorkSource.

REACH conducts a quarterly job fair. The first one during her term of service, over 400 people showed up. "I had become frustrated by the lack of employment available in Tacoma, and with the jobs available that had too many requirements for the youth".

"I learned that I had to re-evaluate what I defined as 'success' in my service. REACH is a force in Pierce County. We make a big impact and our clients rely on us in many ways. I want the local community to know how we are serving Pierce County youth."

In the month of November alone, the resource room served 109 youth. Being interested in a career in vocational and educational counseling, job coaching and working with youth, this AmeriCorps position seemed a perfect fit for Becky. "I saw the position on the AmeriCorps recruitment website and it sounded perfect for me." In her time spent with REACH, Becky knows she made the right choice.



Becky counsels a client

school dropout, no GED, or a criminal background; which can make it difficult to find them something suitable. "It can be frustrating at times," Becky states. "But I try to focus on the positive; work with them to increase their education, which makes them more employable." REACH partners with WorkSource and Goodwill to offer teens training in warehouse logistics, culinary skills, early childhood development and retail skills.

There are success stories, too. Becky recently assisted a young woman in her search for a job in clothing retail. The young woman has a dream of

New WSC staff—Lorraine Coots

Lorraine Coots, the newest member of the WSC family, is no stranger to service. Lorraine is the new AmeriCorps Individual Placement Program Lead, working with Kathy Young, Sue Kitchel and Robert Brader in supporting our individual members across the state.

Lorraine's daughter Nicole served two terms of service in the WSC Washington Reading Corps Programs. She developed after-school programs at McCleary and Pleasant Glade Elementary Schools. She went on to use her education award to obtain a Masters in Teaching at Evergreen State College and now teaches in Tacoma.

Riley, Lorraine's son; also did a stint with national service. Riley served two years with the Washington Conservation Corps through Department of Ecology. He did his first year as a member and then his second as a crew leader. Joining the program right out of high school, Riley worked on many projects in our national forests, learning a great deal about habitat restoration. He is putting the work ethic he learned in the Corps to good use as a production worker for Simpson Timber in Shelton.

Lorraine herself served on the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of her children's school; was a Girl Scout Leader for nine years and has been involved with service clubs for more years than she can remember. She currently serves on the Leadership Development Team of her service club, Pacific NW Optimists, and also works to recruit and retain volunteers.

Lorraine has worked the last 2 ½ years as a supervisor at the Employment Security's Mason WorkSource office in Shelton. While she loved her job there, she has wanted to work with the Washington Service Corps for some time, but positions don't come open very often. "I was very excited to see the opening for this position", Lorraine stated. "I'm happy to be part of a program that focuses on community and helping to meet some of the critical needs that we see every day." Having just started on December 1, Lorraine says "I very much feel like the 'new kid on the block,' but everyone at the WSC has been so nice and welcoming, it feels like a great place to be every day".

Lorraine is looking forward to taking on a member caseload and to begin site monitoring in January.



Lorraine, Robert and Kathy (left to right)



The Washington Service Corps staff wants to again thank all our sites and members for the value you provide in services to your communities by direct service or building a legacy of service to help fight poverty in Washington State.

WSC loves "Great Stories"

Two of the stories in this newsletter were developed based on "great stories" submitted by members the last day of SERVES (Sara Wade and Becky Plant). WSC wants to hear about the great things members are accomplishing at their sites and the impact they are having on the lives of their clients. The service you are doing in your local communities should be recognized and celebrated, but often the WSC does not hear of it. We would like to help you celebrate your accomplishments and spread the word of services being provided.

There is another benefit of broadcasting the great stories program-wide. Often, members make the decision to enroll for a second term of service because they hear of the service at another program and it interests them enough to want to continue and explore other service opportunities. Members tend to be our best form of marketing and recruitment, as they speak from personal experience in the program.

If you have a great story to tell, ask your project supervisor or WSC program coordinator for the Great Stories template, or e-mail Terri Jack at tjack@esd.wa.gov.



Important Information to Know

INSURANCE

Insurance Contact Information for AmeriCorps members:

Summit America Insurance Services
Customer Service: 1-877-246-6997
www.summitamerica-ins.com
claims@summitamerica-ins.com

Insurance Contact Information for VISTA members:

Seven Corners
Customer Service: 1-866-699-4186
www.americorps.sevencorners.com
americorps@sevencorners.com

WSC Website and Contact Information

www.esd.wa.gov/washingtonservicecorps/

Toll-Free: 1-888-713-6080



Upcoming Important Dates and Events

January 1, 2011 New Year's Day

January 17, 2011 MLK Jr. Day of Service

January 31, 2011 Member Performance Evaluations Due

February 21, 2011 Presidents Day Holiday



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